

AS SEEN ON PBS!

Anne
of Green Gables

ANNE'S NEW DRESS

KEVIN SULLIVAN
&
LESLIE GOLDMAN



BASED ON THE NOVEL BY
L. M. MONTGOMERY

ANNE OF GREEN GABLES

Anne's New Dress

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A chapter book based on episode "Sleeves" from *Anne of Green Gables:
The Animated Series*

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Anne of Green Gables*

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CHAPTER ONE

Anne stared at her mailbox. She was almost afraid to peer inside. She hopped from one foot to the other while she chewed on the corner of her braid. She turned to Diana and said, "What if it hasn't arrived yet? I don't think I could wait another whole week."

"Only one way to find out," replied Diana.

Anne took a deep breath. She reached toward the mailbox, opened it, and peered inside. "Oh my goodness! It is here!" Anne gasped with relief. Anne reached in and pulled out a brown paper package. She ripped off the cover. "The deluxe, double-sized..."

Diane grabbed it. "Early spring edition of. . ." she continued.

But Anne grabbed it back "The Beaton's Department Store Catalogue!" she finished triumphantly. She opened the catalogue and flipped through the glossy pages. Diana peered, anxiously, over her shoulder.

Anne stopped at a page. "Isn't that the most beautiful puff-sleeved dress you've ever seen?"

Diane's eyes opened wide as she nodded in agreement.

Anne turned to another page that showed some shoes with narrow pointy toes.

Diane frowned. "Those pointy shoes don't look very comfortable."

"Diana!" Anne said. "Fashionable shoes aren't supposed to be comfortable!" Diana was Anne's closest friend, but sometimes, Anne was amazed that she just didn't understand the most obvious things. She sighed and explained to Diana. "If the shoes were comfortable, how would we be able to tell that they're not ordinary everyday shoes?" Anne shook her head. She turned back to the catalogue and flipped the pages again.

"Look, a motor car," said Diana.

“It says here that the engine has the power of twelve horses,” said Anne.

“Oh!” gasped Diana.

“You never see such fabulous things in Avonlea,” said Anne. She gazed at the lush green hills of Avonlea, the town she now called home. A slight breeze made the tree leaves rustle. Birds chirped from the branches. A cow mooed in the distance. Chickens squawked from the nearby coop.

Suddenly, they heard an unfamiliar sound. It was the distant rumbling of an engine. A horn blared. Diane and Anne looked at each other. Who could that be? They wondered.

A fancy-looking car was approaching. It looked like it came right off of the page in the catalogue. Driving the car was a fancy-looking woman. She had a scarf wrapped around her perfectly styled hair and she wore a dress — with puffed sleeves!

As the car passed, one of the tires dipped into a big puddle. The brown muddy water splashed out, covering Diana! “Oh, my dress!” she cried.

But Anne didn’t hear her friend. Anne was too busy staring at the woman in the car.

Diane tried to brush off the mud. But it only seemed to spread.

Anne turned to her. “Who was that?”

CHAPTER TWO

The entire Ladies Auxiliary of Avonlea was crammed into Hetty King's parlour. Camilla and Rachel stood near a table, which was stacked with delicious looking cakes and pies, corn on the cob, and hard-boiled eggs.

Anne, Marilla and Diana sat on the loveseat, waiting for things to settle down.

"This meeting better start soon. I've got to fix dinner," said Marilla. She glanced at the clock, and then at the crowd.

Hetty clapped her hand. "Silence, silence, si'l vous plait!" she called, in a French accent. "Some of you know the reason I've called this extraordinary meeting of the Women's Auxiliary. But for the rest of you, well, you'll be so thrilled. Hetty paused, for dramatic affect. The women stared at her in silence. "Avonlea's own Amelia Evans, star of the European stage, is gracing us with a visit!" Hetty smiled, and clapped her hands together in excitement.

There was a low buzz of whispering among the women in the parlour.

"Miss Evans?" Anne asked to Diana.

"The woman who ruined my dress," Diana answered back.

"Ah!" said Arnie. She sat up straighter and listened carefully.

"Miss Evans was a pupil of mine. Clearly, I fostered her taste for the finer things in life," Hetty added.

Marilia rolled her eyes. "Modesty not being among them," she said to Anne and Diana.

"So, I thought it would only be fitting to honour her presence with a theatrical event at the Town Hall," said Hetty. She threw out her arms and declared, "An Evening of Modernity, if you will!"

"A what?" asked Marilla, suspiciously.

“You know,” said Hetty. She looked around at the faces in the room. They did not know. She sighed, and explained. “Something in the continental vein. With music, dance and poetry.” There was still no reaction. “I understand it’s all the rage in Europe,” she added.

Diana leaped out of her seat. “I could do my animal impersonations!” she said. She crouched down and curled her arms into wings. “Here is a chicken laying an egg. Cluck, cluck, cluck-o-doodle-do!” Diane walked in circles as she clucked. Then, she crossed her eyes. She smiled, reached out under her, and pulled out an egg!

Felix jumped up and plucked the egg from Diana’s hand. He grabbed two more hardboiled eggs from the table. “I can juggle eggs,” he said.

Gilbert laughed.

Hetty smiled, nervously. “Ah, that’s not quite what I had in mind,” she said.

Marilla stood up. “I think Matthew could be persuaded to play the saw harp. It was a big hit at last year’s Raspberry Jamboree,” she said.

Hetty shook her head. “People, the theme of the evening is ‘modern’. Miss Evans has travelled the culture capitals of the world. We can’t have her thinking we’re backwards folk,” she said.

Marilla frowned. She looked at Diana, who was also upset. Arnie, however, was still fascinating. She stared at Hetty, and grinned.

Hetty continued. “Now I’ve spoken with Mr. Gresham and he’s agreed to play a contemporary piano concerto. And Felicity has elected to perform a modern dance.”

As Hetty spoke, Felicity started doing plies. She smiled proudly.

But Anne wanted to be a part of the action as well. “I can recite a poem!” she called. “Excellent idea, Anne,” said Hetty.

Meanwhile, Felix and Gilbert were up to no good. They crouched down at eye level with the buffet table. Each of them had rigged a catapult, using a spoon and salt shaker. They had stacked a pile of green peas to use as ammunition. “Ready, aim, fire!” said Gilbert. Each pea they flung arched a bit, and then dropped down into a nearby saucer.

One got out of control, though. A pea bounced off of the rim of the saucer, and flew right into Hetty’s tea cup! It splashed onto Hetty’s dress. She looked up at the boys and grimaced. Then she walked over to them. “Gilbert. Felix. Since you two are so mechanically inclined, why don’t you do a presentation?”

“L-l-like, what?” asked Gilbert.

Hetty pursed her lips. She put her hands on her hips. “How about a photographic slide display. You can use that Magic Lantern apparatus of yours. Miss Evans should find that very modern.”

“And very illuminating,” added Felix.

“Then it’s settled,” said Hetty.

Gilbert scowled at Felix.

“Performers, you must be at your best, and in your best, for Miss Evans. We rehearse at the Town Hall in two days.”

Gilbert and Felix crossed their arms and frowned, but Anne was beaming.

CHAPTER THREE

Diana and Anne walked back to Green Gables. Anne was so excited, she was practically skipping.

“Shall I read Shakespeare? No, he’s too old. Such a rarefied occasion begs for Tennyson, don’t you agree, Diana?”

“Tennyson?” she asked. “But he’s so. . .poetic.”

Anne slapped her forehead. “Vex not the poet’s mind, with thy shallow wit. Vex not thou the poet’s mind, for thou canst not fathom it.”

Diana looked at her friend. “Anne, there’s plenty of what you say that I ‘canst not fathom’.”

Felix and Gilbert walked behind the girls. Felix swung a stick on the ground. He shot a stone to Gilbert.

“I can’t believe you got us suckered into this stupid evening of morbidity,” Gilbert complained. He shot the stone back to Felix.

“Me?” asked Felix.

Anne turned to Diana. “Miss Evans sounds quite famous. How come I’ve never heard of any Evans around here?” she asked.

“Her parents are the Tuttles,” said Diana.

“The farmers who live up the road?” Arnie gasped. Something wonderful occurred to her. “You mean, is she an orphan like me?” asked Anne.

“No, she changed her name when she moved to Europe,” said Diana.

Anne threw her arms up, looked up at the sky, and spun around. “That’s the most glamorous thing I’ve ever heard,” she said.

“Seems silly to me,” said Diana.

“I wish I could change my name. Anne Shirley sound so.. .so...” Anne struggled to find the right word. “Unrefined,” she said, finally.

“Miss King says the presentation has to be ‘continental’. What does that mean?” asked Gilbert.

“Something to do with geography,” said Felix.

Anne stopped in her tracks. She turned to face the boys. “No, silly! Continental Europe! It means boulevards, café au lait, art exhibits, and poetry readings. The sophisticated life of the Europeans!”

Felix and Gilbert looked at each other. They were clearly confused. Anne sighed. Suddenly, her life in Avonlea seemed so small! Her dress, so plain. Her friends, so simple.

“Why don’t you do a photographic essay of life right here in Avonlea?” asked Diana. “Yes! Miss Evans might appreciate that since she’s been away so long,” said Anne. “Why do we have to go through all this trouble for some stranger?” asked Gilbert. Felix, Gilbert, Anne and Diana came to the crossroad.

“Yoo-hoo! Children!” they heard. They turned to look. It was Miss Evans. She was calling to them from her motor car. The door was open, but she sat perched in her car. Miss Evans carried a frilly pink parasol. She was wearing a dress with big puffy sleeves, and a hat with a giant feather sticking out of it. She was glancing around, helplessly. When they were closer, she explained why.

“I seem to be stuck in the mud,” she said. She turned her parasol, and blinked her eyes. “Would you be so gallant as to assist me over that puddle?” she asked Gilbert. “It would be a shame to soil my new petticoats.”

Gilbert stared at Miss Evans. His face turned bright red. “An, uh,” he stuttered. Anne nudged him with her elbow. “Gilbert and Felix would be happy to, Miss

Evans.”

Miss Evans smiled and handed Anne her parasol.

Gilbert and Felix made a chair by linking their arms together. They lifted Miss Evans. Tramping through the mud, they made sure that not a drop of it reached Miss Evans's fancy dress.

Miss Evans glanced down at the boys' dirty cuffs. "That's the virtue of farm spun clothes. One needn't worry about them getting dirty." She smiled.

The boys huffed and puffed. Finally, they set her down, safe from dirt's way.

"Merci beaucoup!" said Miss Evans. She stroked Gilbert's cheek. "Such a darling gentleman."

"Miss Evans, your parasol," said Anne, handing it back to her.

"Thank you ever so much!" said Miss Evans. She exaggerated 'ever' in a way that Anne had never heard in all of Avonlea.

Miss Evans reached down and gave a slight tug to one of Anne's braids. "My, those pigtails are so, so, Avonlea! Toddle-loo!"

Anne smiled, but only vaguely. She watched Miss Evans swagger up the lane toward the small farmhouse where her parents lived.

Gilbert watched her retreat. His face was still red and frozen.

Diana waved her hand in front of him. "Gilbert, are you okay?" she asked.

But he didn't answer.

Diana leaned over to Anne, who looked almost as stunned as Gilbert. "I think he has a crush on Miss Evans," she whispered.

"She is very beautiful," gasped Anne. A grin sneaked its way onto her face. She clasped her hands together. "Perhaps Miss Evans will be so impressed with my elocution that she'll take me on a tour of Europe!"

“If she doesn’t ask me first,” said Felicity. She pulled up next to the gang on her bicycle. “Mother’s getting me a new puff-sleeved dress just for the occasion. What are you going to be wearing, Anne?”.

“Uh, my Sunday dress,” said Anne.

“Does it have puffed sleeves?” asked Felicity.

“No,” said Anne.

“Too bad,” smirked Felicity. “You’ll be very unfashionable.” Felicity pedaled away, leaving Anne in the dust.

CHAPTER FOUR

Anne went home and searched through her closet for the absolutely perfect dress.

Unfortunately, it just wasn't there! She peered into her wardrobe. Three dresses were lined up. Two of them were identical to the frock she was wearing. The third was brown silk. It had a high collar but flat, plain old sleeves. Anne pulled the brown dress out, and held it up. She looked at herself in the mirror.

Sometimes, when Anne was daydreaming, she would imagine a girl who looked just like her. The girl's name was Katie Maurice. She appeared in the mirror, and they could have a conversation as if they were two separate people. This was one of those times.

"Mmm. Not bad," Anne said.

Katie Maurice, Anne's reflection, came to life. "Exactly. It's worse than bad. It's ghastly!" said Katie.

Anne threw the dress onto her bed. "Oh," she sighed. "I must have a new dress! Otherwise, I'll look so, so, Avonlea!"

From the mirror, Katie shrugged. "Then why don't you buy one?" she asked.

What a fabulous idea, thought Anne. She was so glad she invented Katie. Anne scrambled over to her piggy bank. He popped open the underside, and watched the coins tumble to the floor. She picked them up and counted. "Forty-five cents," she said. "It's a start. Maybe Marilla will lend me some more."

Anne ran into the kitchen to ask Marilla.

"Certainly not!" said Marilla.

Anne watched her dry the dishes. "But everybody will be wearing puffed-sleeved dresses," she pleaded.

“Your Sunday dress is perfectly fine,” said Marilla.

“But it’s not fashionable,” said Anne.

“People will be listening to you recite poetry, not looking at your dress,” said Marilla. Anne sighed, and slunk back to her room.

Meanwhile, Gilbert worked on his photography in his family’s barn.

Felix was dressed as a French waiter. He had a pencil thin moustache painted onto his face. He held a carafe of purplish liquid.

Diana was in her finest dress. She sat next to an overturned crate.

Hanging in the background was a painted bed sheet. The scene was of Avonlea, but it didn’t look exactly like Avonlea. It was painted to look like a street in Paris.

“This is silly,” said Felix. He shifted his weight from one leg to the other. His dress shoes were too tight, and his suit was scratchy. It was also very hot. He tugged at his collar.

“Sshh. I’m trying to create a vision here,” said Gilbert.

“I thought we were going to photograph life in Avonlea,” said Felix.

Gilbert lifted his head out from under the black cloth attached to his big boxy camera. “But not the real Avonlea,” he said. “It would hardly impress Miss Evans to see a bunch of cows. Now serve the wine!”

“It’s grape juice, dum-dum,” growled Felix.

“Hurry up,” called Gilbert. “We’re running out of light.”

“And I’m running out of patience,” said Diana.

“Some grape juice wine, mademoiselle?” asked Felix. He made his way toward her. But then he tripped, and spilled grape juice all over Diana.

“Aarrgh!” yelled Diana.

“Sorry! I’m so sorry, Diana,” said Felix. Gilbert threw up his arms. He couldn’t work with amateurs!

CHAPTER FIVE

Anne wandered out to the barn to talk to Matthew. She found him prying a piece of wood from the wall with a crowbar.

“You want to talk about something?” he asked. He set the crowbar down, and wiped his hands on his overalls.

“Matthew, as you know, my recitation is in a few days and it seems my Sunday dress is a trifle, well. . .” she started.

Matthew pulled a loose plank from the wall. He inspected it and shook his head. “Rotten. Termites. Looks like we’re going to have to replace the whole section. That’s gonna cost a pretty penny,” he said. He glanced over at Anne. “Sorry, Anne, what were you saying?”

“Awe, it’s nothing,” said Anne.

She wandered over to Barry’s Pond. Diana and Gilbert were already there. Gilbert had set up another scene. This time, he tried to transform a pond in Avonlea into an Italian canal.

Anne went to the edge of the pond and talked to Diana, who was floating in a gondola.

“I didn’t have the heart to ask Matthew for the money. Next to fixing the barn, a new dress just seems too extravagant,” Anne explained.

Diana sat, perched in a pretend gondola, wearing another lovely frock.

“You can borrow my dress if you like, when I’m finished with this ridiculous pose,” said Diana.

“But Diana, that’s your last good dress,” said Anne.

“You’ve done much for me, Anne. It’s the least I can do for you,” she said.

“Oh, Diana, that is the act of a true kindred spirit,” exclaimed Anne.

Gilbert looked up from his camera and scowled. “Shh! The artiste is trying to work. Diana, stay still!”

“I am,” said Diana.

Gilbert looked through the camera, again. “But you’re sinking in the frame,” he said.

“That’s because I am sinking!” yelled Diana. She leapt from the sinking gondola, and swam to shore.

When she made it to the edge, Anne helped her out of the pond. “I hope the dress isn’t ruined,” she said.

“I’m sure it’s nothing that a day in the sun and an iron won’t fix,” said Diana. She stepped out of the pond. But the hem of her dress got caught on a pointy branch. She looked back, and frowned. Diana took another step and there was a long and loud rip.

“The dress!” shouted Anne and Diana. They both burst into tears.

Gilbert rolled his eyes. He threw up his hands. “That’s it!” he shouted. “My days as an artiste are officially over. To heck with Miss King’s Evening of Mobility, or whatever it’s called. There’s nothing and nobody in this town worth photographing!”

“What about me?” called Miss Evans. She twirled her parasol as she walked up next to Gilbert.

Gilbert was stunned. Once more, his face turned bright red. This time, though, he wasn’t completely speechless. “Miss Evans,” he stuttered.

“I adore having my picture taken,” she said. “And I assure you, I’m the most cooperative model !“

Gilbert smiled.

Anne and Diana were waterlogged and exasperated. They looked at each other and moaned.

CHAPTER SIX

Anne slumped down onto the loveseat in the parlour of Green Gables. “Why, oh why, must I be the only one without puffed sleeves?” she asked herself, melodramatically. She picked up a small quilt and buried her head into it. “If I had a puffed-sleeve dress, I’d be sure to impress Miss Evans.” Diana stood and draped the quilt over her shoulders. She began walking back and forth across the room, dreamily.

“If only I had something in a shimmering emerald green, with the biggest puffed sleeves in the whole wide world!” she said. She spun around and around.

Then she began to daydream. The quilt turned into a stunning, and quite fashionable green dress. It had billowy and glamorous puffed sleeves.

“Just like this!” said Anne.

The sleeves puffed up even more. Suddenly Anne was lifted into the air. She floated around. She knocked over a lamp with her hip. Her foot got caught on a chair and that fell over, too.

“Ah, with sleeves like this, I’m positively floating!”

In fact, Anne imagined that she was floating along the hallway to the front door. She sucked in as she tried to squeeze through. “Hmph. Bit of a, umph, tight squeeze. Have to, umph, get, umph, Matthew to widen, umph, the door.” Pop! Anne finally managed to get through!

She floated through the air above the roadway. “Hey, this is fun!” she exclaimed. “Miss Evans! Miss Evans! Hello there!”

Miss Evans was driving in her motor car. She shielded her eyes, and looked up into the air. “Why, Anne, you look so radiant in that dress! Why not come on a European tour with me?”

“I’d love to!” said Anne.

She floated past Miss Evans. Next, she floated above Felicity, who was still pedaling down the dirt road on her bicycle.

“Felicity, did you hear that?” she called down. “Miss Evans is taking me to Europe!”

“What, not in that ratty old blanket? Hah!” Felicity yelled.

Anne’s smile quickly faded from her face. She looked down, and her dress turned back into the blanket. She plummeted to the ground. Her spirits plummeted even farther.

She looked around, she was back on the loveseat in the parlour. She was clutching the plain old blanket. She was still plain old Anne. She was still from plain old Avonlea. “Oooh! I must have a puffed sleeved dress. I must!” she declared.

CHAPTER SEVEN

It was a pleasant Saturday afternoon, so Marilla and Anne decided to go shopping. They walked down Main Street. Each of them held some bags. Anne was swinging hers, happily.

“What’s next on the list?” asked Marilla.

Anne pulled a piece of paper from the pocket of her dress, and glanced down at it. “Baking soda and pepper,” she said.

Mr. Gresham and Camilla walked up to them. Mr. Gresham was wearing a top hat and tails. Camilla was wearing a large feather hat.

“You’re looking dapper today, Mr. Gresham,” said Marilla.

“We’ve been hat shopping! See my new feather chapeau!” said Camilla.

“It’s very, urn, colorful,” said Marilla.

“Thank you,” said Camilla. She tried to take a step forward, but stopped. Her face twisted in pain. “Ouch!” she said.

“Camilla, what’s the matter?” asked Marilla.

“These new shoes. Aren’t they wonderful?” said Camilla, modeling her pointy toed shoes.

Marilla frowned slightly. Shoes that were too uncomfortable to walk in? That didn’t sound so wonderful to her!

Suddenly, they spotted Gilbert. Except it didn’t look quite like Gilbert, because he was wearing a brand new suit!

“My, aren’t we all fancied up, Gilbert?” said Marilla.

Gilbert smiled. He puffed out his chest, proudly. “Miss Evans has agreed to let me take her photograph tomorrow!” he said. “My mother bought me a new suit and I’m breaking it in.” He tugged at the end of his jacket.

Felix ran up behind him, singing, “Gilbert and Miss Evans sitting in a tree. K-I-S-S-IN-G!”

“Why you little, runt,” said Gilbert.

Felix ran off, with Gilbert in quick pursuit.

Marilla shook her head. She turned to Anne. “This ‘Evening of Absurdity’ has certainly gone to everyone’s head,” she said. But Anne wasn’t listening, at all.

Anne was staring into the window of the General Store. A beautiful puffed sleeve dress was on display. The price tag read \$2.45.

“Oh, what a grand dress,” said Anne, dreamily.

“With a grand price, too,” said Marilla.

“It would look wonderful on me,” said Anne.

Mr. Lawson appeared in the window. He replaced the price tag with a sign that read ‘sold’.

Felicity joined Mr. Lawson. She looked at the dress and beamed.

Anne was upset. But only for a few seconds. She saw something else in the window that lifted her spirits. In one corner of the window, there was a bin of fabric bolts that were on sale. Anne walked into the store. If she couldn’t buy a new puff-sleeved dress, there was still the next best thing. She reached into the bin and searched for the perfect fabric. She found a bit of green. It was almost the exact shade as the dress she had dreamed about! She turned to Marilla. “Green taffeta, and it’s only four cents a yard!”

“Why spend your allowance on fabric?” asked Marilla.

“I’m going to sew puffed sleeves on my Sunday dress,” she said.

“Won’t that be a trifle mismatched?” asked Marilla. “But green suits me, everybody says so,” pleaded Anne. “Vanity, thy name is Anne Shirley.” Marilla sighed.

“I’m not being vain, Marilla, I’m just being. . .economical,” said Anne.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Anne rushed home to work on her new creation. She worked swiftly. She worked carefully. Well, she tried to work carefully. But in the end, she stuck her fingers with pins almost as many times as she stuck the dress. But she still kept working. And alas, the dress was complete by sundown.

She tried on the dress carefully. The green sleeves billowed out from the brown armholes. It looked, it looked, well, it looked like she sewed them on in just a few hours flat.

Anne went out to find Marilla. She was in the kitchen. Anne crept in. "What do you think?" Anne asked.

Marilla looked up from her baking. She was at a loss for words.

Luckily, Matthew was just walking by. "Now, that's a very lovely costume, Anne," he said. "What are you supposed to be?"

"It's," Anne started to explain. But Matthew wouldn't let her finish.

"No! Don't tell me. Let me guess. You're a tree? Those green things on your shoulders are leaves, right?" he asked.

Anne shook her head, gravely. She stared at the wooden floor.

"Oh, I know!" Matthew clapped his hands together and grinned. "You're a bird with wings!" he said.

Anne blinked back her tears. She rushed out of the room.

"Did I say something wrong?" asked Matthew.

Marilla ran after Anne. She found Anne in her room. Anne was back in her regular clothes. She was cutting off the sleeves from her Sunday dress.

"It was a failure," said Anne.

"A valiant attempt, to be sure," said Marilla.

"Maybe if I had a new hairdo, then no one would notice what I'm wearing," said Anne.

She walked over to her mirror. She picked up some flowers, and put them in her hair.

“Anne, don’t you think it’s time you stopped worrying about your appearance and started to think about the recital,” said Marilla.

“Recital?” said Anne.

“And you do have a rehearsal tomorrow,” Marilla reminded her, gently.

Anne’s jaw dropped. She was so worried about her outfit, she hadn’t even chosen a poem to read for the show.

CHAPTER NINE

The very next morning, the town hail was buzzing with excitement. Hetty was in charge of programming. She shouted to be heard above the sawing and hammering.

“What do you intend to read?” she asked Anne.

“Uh, it’s a surprise,” said Anne.

“Now why does this irregularity not surprise me?” asked Hetty.

A bright light lit up the whole room. Hetty squinted and shielded her eyes. “No, no, no. Those lights are far too bright, Mr. Gresham.” Hetty walked toward the ladder. “Lower please! Not many complexions can hold up to such scrutiny. Goodness knows, mine can’t!”

Hetty looked at her clipboard. “Master Blythe, are you ready?”

Felix and Gilbert were setting up the Magic Lantern. It was a slide projector. “Yes ma’am. Fire it up, Felix,” said Gilbert.

They turned the projector toward an old bed sheet, which was strung up at the back of the stage. A brownish photograph of a barn at sunset flashed into focus.

“That’s a beautiful photograph,” said Anne.

“It’s nothing compared to the pictures I’ll be taking of Miss Evans. If only she would get here soon,” said Gilbert. He glanced at the clock, nervously.

“What time is she supposed to arrive?” asked Anne.

“An hour ago,” said Gilbert.

Suddenly, Miss Evans breezed in. A waft of expensive smelling perfume lingered in her trail. “Bonjour, les enfants!” she said. “Sorry I’m late, but I was trying to reach an impresario from New York.”

“How exciting!” said Hetty.

“He wants to meet with me, so I’m afraid I can’t attend today’s rehearsal,” she went on.

“But what about our photo session?” asked Gilbert.

Miss Evans spun around and stared at Gilbert. “Our what?” she asked. “D-d-don’t you remember? I’m supposed to take your picture,” said Gilbert. “Oh dear. Some other time, perhaps,” said Miss Evans.

“When?” asked Gilbert.

“Let me see,” Miss Evans tilted her head up. “I have my hair appointment and tomorrow I get my nails done. Mmm. How’s Friday?”

“But Friday’s too late!” said Gilbert.

“Oh dear, that reminds me. I must call my manager. I don’t suppose there’s a telephone in this old barn?” she said.

She spun around. Her puffed sleeve knocked over the slide projector. But she swished away, without even noticing. The projector came down to the floor with a crash. A few pieces came loose.

Gilbert looked down at his projector sullenly. Felix dove in to pick up the pieces. “Not a problem,” he said. “We can easily glue it.”

“What’s the point?” asked Gilbert. “There won’t be any slide show.”

“Don’t be upset, Gilbert. I’m sure Miss Evans didn’t mean to be so rude,” said Anne. “Oh, just let me go,” said Gilbert. He looked like he was about to cry.

“I’ll get a broom,” said Anne.

She rushed around the corner, holding the broom. She passed by Miss Evans, and couldn’t help but overhear her phone conversation.

“I’ll be there as soon as I’m done with this silly ‘Evening of Mediocrity,” Miss Evans said.

Anne stopped in her tracks. She couldn’t believe what she was hearing!

“They are such charming country bumpkins, really. Believe me, Alfredo, I can’t wait to get back to civilization.”

Anne’s smile faded into a frown. Her eyes welled up with tears. She blinked them back, and took a deep breath. Silently, she handed the broom to Gilbert. Then she went home. She had a lot of thinking to do.

CHAPTER TEN

Anne sat at the kitchen table, explaining to Marilla what a snob Miss Evans was, while Marilla darned some socks.

“It was positively crushing to hear her say those awful things,” Anne complained.

“Looks like Miss Evans isn’t as lovely on the inside as she is on the outside,” said Marilla.

“To think, I was so taken by her fine clothes and elegant demeanour, when underneath all the puff and pageantry lurked a vile, cold-hearted—”

“Now let’s not get carried away,” said Marilla.

Matthew walked into the kitchen. He had a big saddle in his arms. “Anne, I thought we might ride the Sorrel mare into town and buy you one of those dresses with the poofy sleeves. I figure, since everyone else in town is getting all gussied up, you might as well, too.”

Anne sighed. She walked up to Matthew. “Thank you, Matthew,” she said. “But I don’t really need a poofy dress.”

“Why not?” asked Matthew.

“Because people will be listening to my recitation, not looking at my clothes,” she said.

Matthew looked at Marilla. They smiled at each other.

“Speaking of which,” Anne said, as she stood up. “I have work to do!”

“What do you intend to recite?” asked Marilla.

“I’ve decided to write a poem — something that expresses how I really feel,” explained Anne.

Anne walked over to Gilbert’s house. She knocked on the door. “Gilbert, we need to talk,” she said.

Gilbert slumped against the doorframe. “I’m really not in the mood,” he said.

“It’s important. I need your slides,” Anne told him.

“What do you want my crummy slides for?” he asked.

“You’ll see,” said Anne.

“Not that I care, anymore, but I doubt Miss Evans will find them very ‘continental.” he said.

Anne smiled. “That is my idea, precisely! Come on, let’s find Diana.” The two of them ran off.

Later that night, Anne sat in her bedroom. She was wearing her plain brown frock.

She practiced her poem. "Sentimental, continental, boulevards..."

As she worked, Marilla combed and braided her long red hair. “All memorized?” asked Marilla.

“Yes, Marilla. Thanks for helping me,” said Anne. She turned to face Marilla. “How do I look?”

“Very pretty,” said Marilla. She smiled at Anne. But then her smile turned into a frown. “But something’s missing.”

“What?” asked Anne.

Marilla pulled something from her pocket and presented it to Anne. “This!” she said.

“A brooch!” said Anne.

Marilla pinned it onto Anne’s frock. “It belonged to my mother. It’s small and plain, and not likely to be noticed, but. .

Anne jumped up from her bed and looked at herself in the mirror. There were tears of joy in her eyes. “Oh, Marilla, it’s the most beautiful thing I could wear!” She gave Marilla a big hug.

Then, Anne, Marilla and Matthew went into town for the big event.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The town hall was jumping. Music played. People rushed about, getting ready for the show. Hetty and Felicity were in the front row. Both of them were in brand new puffed- sleeved frocks.

Mr. Gresham was on stage. He wore his top hat and tails. He banged on the piano keys, racing through the last cords of his piece. What he played didn't sound much like a song. It was more like a jumble of random notes. Although it wasn't very pleasant, it was very loud.

Miss Evans rushed into the room. She was wearing a sleeveless black gown. "Sorry I'm late, everyone," she called.

Hetty rushed up to her. "Oh, I'm glad you're here. You haven't missed much. I'm afraid Mr. Gresham isn't very well-practiced."

Hetty winced as Mr. Gresham continued to play.

"Dear, you look marvelous. But what happened to your puffed sleeves?" asked Hetty. "In Paris, they only wear puffed sleeves in the daytime," said Miss Evans.

Hetty's jaw dropped open. Suddenly, she felt very silly in her new dress. Felicity heard too. Her face turned bright red!

Mr. Gresham finally finished banging at the piano. He looked at the crowd. There was a weak round of applause, some murmuring, and a lot of sighs of relief.

Marilla elbowed Matthew, who was sleeping. He woke up with a start, saw that Mr. Gresham was done, and removed his earplugs. "Huh?" he asked.

"Anne is next," said Marilla.

Matthew stood up and shuffled toward the aisle. The lights dimmed.

Anne stood in the spotlight. She had changed out of her plain brown frock. Instead, she was wearing coveralls, rolled up at the ankles. On her

head sat a straw hat.

She cleared her throat, and began her poem.

“Ode to Avonlea by Anne Shirley.

The town I call home is not quite so continental

The women may not wear the finest lace

The men, at times, show little taste

And excuse me if I seem a little sentimental

But in my heart I know there is no finer place

Than my sweet home, Avonlea!”

Anne nodded to her friends. Gilbert and Felix fired up the Magic Lantern. A shot of Avonlea at sunrise was projected onto the old bed sheet. A rooster sat on a fence.

“Cockadoodle-do!” It wasn’t the rooster who spoke. It was Diana. She was next to the bed sheet. She also wore coveralls. She was doing her fabulous rooster imitation!

“Hit it, Matthew,” said Anne.

Matthew sat in a corner of the stage, with his saw. He started playing it.

Anne continued with her poem. “Avonlea. Avonlea. My sweet home Avonlea.”

The next slide showed Mrs. Blyth hanging clothes on the line. A big fat pig stood next to her.

“Where the Blythe pig likes to dress

In his Mistresses Sunday best”

The next slide showed the pig in a frilly dress!

Diana Oirilced.

Marilla and Hetty watched from the audience. Marilla smiled at the stage, proudly. But Hetty was positively horrified!

The next slide was of a cow. Instead of grazing in the field, it looked like the cow was jumping over the moon.

“And the cows really do jump over the moon,” said Anne. The next slide was of the cow being chased by the butcher’s carriage. “Moo!” said Diana.

The crowd laughed.

“Avonlea. Avonlea. My sweet home, Avonlea,” said Anne. The next slide showed Matthew swinging a scythe. “Until the sun sets in the west

A farmer has no time to jest,” said Anne.

Matthew, and Diana joined in, to sing, “Thank goodness, folks still take time to sit and rest.”

“Avonlea. Avonlea. My sweet home, Avonlea.”

The next slide showed a Sorrel mare pulling a wagon loaded with bushels of apples. “Where the Sorrel Mare’s strength is cause for celebration.”

In the next slide, the Sorrel Mare was eating a bushel of apples. In the cart, there were lots of apple cores. Matthew watched the scene. His face was bright red. He glared at the mare. “And her enormous appetite causes much consternation!”

Miss Evans watched the program. She was really concentrating.

Hetty watched her, nervously. It was hard to tell what Miss Evans was thinking.

The last slide showed Marilla, being followed by a gaggle of baby ducklings. Anne was tagging along at the end.

“And mother isn’t necessarily a blood relation,” she said.

“Avonlea. Avonlea. My sweet home, Avonlea.”

“It may not have been the boulevards of Paris,”

Next, on the screen, was a shot of Felix dropping wine all over Diana.

“Or the gilded gondolas of Venice.”

The next slide showed a very angry, and a very wet Diana sinking in the Gondola.

“But it’s still our home sweet home, Avonlea.”

The music stopped and the lights went on. Anne smiled out at the crowd, nervously. There was silence at first. But then, the room burst into applause. Marilla beamed with pride. Hetty looked at Miss Evans. Miss Evans smiled wide and clapped. So Hetty clapped, as well. Miss Evans stood up, starting a standing ovation. The rest of the crowd joined her.

“Bravo!” said Hetty.

“Why be so stuffy? This performance calls for more spirited praise!” said Miss Evans. She raised two fingers to her lips, and whistled.

Anne, Gilbert, Matthew, and Diana all bowed.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The next day, Anne, Gilbert and Diana were walking down a country road. They approached a small bridge.

“I’ll never forget the expression on Miss King’s face when you started ‘oinking’,” said Anne.

“That was priceless,” said Gilbert.

“But everybody seemed to enjoy themselves,” said Anne.

“Even Miss Evans,” added Diana.

“Guess we reminded her that Avonlea has its own special style,” said Gilbert.

Suddenly, the gang heard some honking. A car passed along the bridge. It was Miss Evans! She waved. “Au revoir, les enfants!” she called.

As she passed, her tire hit a puddle. Splash! Once again, Diana was covered in mud!

“Oh, Diana, you’re covered in mud again! What are you going to do?” asked Anne.

Diana smiled. “Go with the flow,” she shrugged. Then, she jumped into the pond.

Gilbert and Anne laughed.

Anne turned to Gilbert. “Well, if you can’t beat em’,” she said. But before she could finish her sentence, she pushed Gilbert into the lake.

“Woah-oh!” he shouted.

Anne dove in after them.

“That’s the beauty of farm spun rags, you don’t worry about getting them dirty!” said Diana.

Everybody laughed.

“And there is no place better, than Sweet Home Avonlea!” said Anne.

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